

## IV. Austria.

### The Parliamentary Action of the Social-Democratic Labour Party in Austria.

The first elections after the conquest of universal and equal suffrage resulted in the return of 87 Social-Democratic members of the Reichsrat. At the subsequent by-elections two more seats were gained, but one of the elected members having, owing to a local dispute, left the party and resigned his seat, the latter was in the following by-election captured by the bourgeois parties. There are thus at the present moment in the Lower House of the Austrian Reichsrat eighty-eight Social-Democrats, including 52 Germans, 24 Czechs, 6 Poles, 4 Italians and 2 Ruthenians.

All the Social-Democratic members of the House belong to the "Union of Social-Democratic Members of Parliament" which is divided into five national sections: the "Club" of German Social-Democrats, the "Club" of Czech Social-Democrats, the "Club" of Polish Social-Democrats, the group of the Italian Social-Democrats, and the representation of the Rutheno-Ukrainian Social-Democracy. In all questions of an economic, social, political and educational nature the international Union acts as an undivided whole, taking its decisions by a majority of members. As against this the several national groups reserve their complete autonomy in all national matters. Still even so it has hitherto been possible to preserve in important decisions affecting national questions the unity of the general international Union.

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At first, under the impression of our great electoral victory, the bourgeois parties of all nationalities made common cause against us. The representatives of the German, Czech and Polish bourgeois parties have all entered the Beck Government, and Clericals as well as Liberals, Industrialists as well as Agrarians, representatives of the large capitalist as well as of the lower middle-class parties have all united under

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the war-cry: "Isolation of the Social-Democrats!" At the same time, however, the composition of the Ministry showed the progress towards the democratisation of public life which had been effected by the electoral reform. Indeed, the Government was a faithful reflection of the parliamentary majority, petty bourgeois and peasants occupying seats on the ministerial benches where hitherto only haughty Feudals and bureaucrats, divorced from the people, had sat. All bourgeois parties supported this Government, and the opposition only consisted of the Social-Democrats and the representatives of the Ruthenian peasantry.

It was the hope of the propertied classes that their alliance would set a limit to the expansion of the Social-Democracy. In this they were completely disappointed. Our criticism of the sins, both of commission and omission, of the bourgeois majority and its Government found a most lively echo in the minds of the electors, and the bourgeois parties, in order to hold their own, were obliged to make concessions to our demands. We thus succeeded in obtaining a number of important reforms, partly carried out by the Beck Government and partly prepared by it and carried out subsequently. The new law concerning the legal status of commercial employes; the legal regulation of the hours of work in commercial establishments; the extension of accident insurance to the building trades; the suppression of the use of white phosphorus in the match industry; the extension and improvement of factory inspection; the issue of provisions for the protection against lead poisoning; the improvement in the treatment and legal position of Government officials, Government servants, and workers in the Government employ; the abolition of camp service in the case of reservists of the eleventh and twelfth years; the reform of the law concerning the right of soldiers to bring forward complaints; a criminal law amendment act reducing the punishment for offences against property; the safeguarding of the interests of the servants on some of the big railways which had been nationalised — all these reforms were carried partly in direct response to our demands, and partly with our co-operation and under our effective criticism.

The propertied classes being frightened by our victories in the campaign for the franchise and in the subsequent elections as well as by the growth of our Trade Unions and co-operative movement, became very dissatisfied when they saw that we, notwithstanding the alliance of all bourgeois parties against us, were still able to exercise a great influence on the affairs of Parliament. The class antagonism grew very acute, as illustrated by the fact that the employers' associations which were becoming ever stronger made prompt use of the industrial depression which set in in 1908 in order to increase their terrorism against the workers and to form "yellow" Trade Unions. Nor were they idle in the political field. The reproach that the international Social-Democracy is indifferent or even inimical to national interests has always been in Austria, where eight nations since 1848 have been carrying on an embittered struggle for power in the State, the provinces, and the communes, a very efficient weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Accordingly the embers of national strife were now once more

fanned into a flame in order to strike the social opponent. For sixty years the German and the Czechs had now been fighting against each other with the utmost vigour, so that the maintenance of the alliance between the two in the Government majority would have even with the best will of those concerned been a rather difficult job. It became, however, an utterly impossible thing when the same parties which had united against us in Parliament began to excite the chauvinist instincts among the electors as a means of combatting us. In this way the national ideologie, which was used as a weapon against us outside Parliament, rendered the coalition which had been formed against us impossible within the walls of Parliament itself.

Already in the summer of 1908 the German-Czech-Polish coalition and, together with it, the Beck Government became gravely compromised by the national feuds. Still the danger of breaking up might have been averted had not the Coalition at the same time encountered other and still more powerful forces inimical to it. There had already long been noticeable in the Court, feudal, and bureaucratic circles a feeling against the Beck Ministry which though a bourgeois, was nevertheless a democratic Government. The longing after a "strong" Government became still greater as the preparations for the annexation of Bosnia approached their completion. Ultimately by the clever use of the difficulties in which the Ministry had landed owing to the national conflicts within the Government majority, these reactionary circles succeeded in overthrowing the Beck Cabinet and setting up in its place another under Bienert.

The Bienert Government is essentially different from that which preceded it. It is not a parliamentary, but a bureaucratic Government, representing not the bourgeois classes of all the nations, but relying on the German, Italian, and Polish bourgeoisies, while the Czech and Southern-Slavic bourgeois parties as well as the Ruthenian remain opposed to it. It has never enjoyed more than a majority of a few votes, and as the bourgeois parties of the Opposition, allied in the Slavic Union, could always entertain the hope of being able to upset it, Parliament got involved into an endless maze of hard political feuds which disturbed all serious work of reform. The Social-Democratic Union has been fighting this Government from the very first day of its inception.

But our task was not confined to opposing the Government. The Slav bourgeois parties soon began to use against the Government the power of obstruction. The standing orders of the House rendered it possible for any twenty members, by bringing in an endless number of urgent motions which had to be discussed without delay and prior to any other question, to block most effectively the order of the day. The use of this means of obstruction had ruined the old privilege-Parliament, and now made its appearance in the democratic Parliament also. To us this Czech-Sloven obstruction appeared very dangerous. It not only hindered all economic work of reform, it not only served as a means for small groups of bourgeois politicians to extort from any and every Government concessions to their special interests, but it also conjured up the great danger that the violent scenes of obstruction would lower Parliament even in



the eyes of the masses of the people and thus prepare the psychological conditions in which a "strong" Government would be able contemptuously to set aside the incapable and inefficient Parliament and prescribe to the nationalities their mode of common life which their respective representatives had been unable to bring about. This danger we had to combat, and so we fought against the obstruction of the Slavic Union with all our might. The highest point as well as its conclusion this struggle against obstruction reached in December, 1909. As the obstruction was hindering at the time the consideration of several commercial treaties of great importance and of some labour protection laws, the working class organised against the obstructionist street demonstrations while Parliament at the same time was trying to break down the obstruction by sitting continuously for eighty-six hours. This action proved successful. As the obstructing parties were unwilling to drop their methods without also depriving the other parties of the chance of using them, they themselves introduced a motion proposing for the space of one year to change the standing orders in such a wise as would render the obstruction of the course of business in Parliament if not quite impossible, at least exceedingly difficult. This motion was energetically supported by the Social-Democratic Union and was adopted became law. By this means the democratic Parliament not only obtained protection against further attacks by chauvinist parties, but was also saved from the danger of a coup d'état by those in power. The ground has thus been won on which we could continue our every-day parliamentary fight against the Government.

The political struggle which we had to wage was dictated to us by the events in the domain of foreign politics, — above all, by the annexation of Bosnia and its subsequent developments. Like all other sections of the public, the Social-Democracy was taken completely by surprise by this event. When the Delegations assembled we found ourselves confronted with an already accomplished fact. Our representative on the Delegation thus defined our attitude towards this event:

"The Social-Democratic Labour Party of Austria maintains its principle that only to the peoples themselves belongs the right of determining their destiny, and it will in the future as it did in the past strive with all its power for the realisation through the democratisation of the State of the conditions necessary for the establishment of a real right of self-determination for all nationalities. It sees in the annexation of the occupied countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina nothing more than the formal fixation of a long existing fact, which by itself constitutes for the peaceful development and the fulfilment of the aspirations of the inhabitants of those countries no better guarantee than has existed hitherto. While we expect and, indeed, demand with all energy that this State act should be laid before the Austrian Reichsrat for its sanction according to the Constitution, we nevertheless must protest against a procedure which places the legislative bodies of the Empire in such an important matter practically before accomplished

facts. Nor can we conceal our fears lest this action should increase the danger which threatens our peace and be used as a pretext for imposing upon the peoples of Austria new military burdens.

The influence, moreover, of this action upon our policy in the Near East is in no wise calculated to further our economic relations with the Balkan countries. One danger is indeed obvious, namely, that the strength of the Young Turkish regime, on which the hopes for a healthy development of the conditions on the Balkan Peninsula depend, may be shattered and paralyzed. At the same time we point out that the Balkan policy of our Foreign Office stands in the most glaring contradiction with the tendencies of agrarian protection which dominate our fiscal policy in the Balkans. We are also obliged in this connexion to utter our complaint that the hitherto obtaining administration of the occupied countries should have failed to further the cultural and political advancement of the population, that it should, indeed, be guilty of such abuses that even to this day a great portion of the population still regards it as a foreign, — nay, unfriendly Power. We are, therefore, obliged to demand in the very first instance, and that with all the energy at our disposal, that this failure should at once be made good, and that the Constitution which is projected for Bosnia and Herzegovina should offer serious guarantees for the political development of the country and endow the labouring classes there with at least that slight modicum of political rights and social institutions which to-day exist in Austria."

When shortly afterwards the Austrian Reichsrat assembled we several times succeeded in forcing the subject of the annexation and of the European crisis caused by it to the forefront of parliamentary discussion. In the course of four great debates, which riveted the attention of the entire public, we emphasised the international solidarity of the Proletariat as against the Imperialist policy of the capitalist Great Powers. At a moment of the greatest war danger our spokesman sent from the rostrum of the Austrian Lower House of Parliament our fraternal greetings to the Servian Social-Democracy, and we succeeded on March 26, 1909, in inducing the Reichsrat to make an impressive demonstration in favour of maintenance of peace. Simultaneously, however, we also did our best to discharge our duty towards the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We demanded, above all, for the annexed countries a democratic constitution. If we did not succeed in carrying this through, we nevertheless obtained so much that universal suffrage has been introduced in the two provinces for the electoral colleges in which the people will vote according to their religion. Nor were our efforts to induce the Government to extend the labour protection laws and workmens insurance to the two annexed provinces quite without result. Our demand that the Bosnian Kmetts should be emancipated from the feudal shackles at the cost of the State has not yet been acceded to. We nevertheless hope that with the assembly of the Bosnian-Herzegovian Diet a step towards the solution of the Bosnian agrarian question will become possible.



In close connexion with the questions of foreign policy stands the problem of the commercial relations of Austria-Hungary with the Balkan States. For many years the fiscal policy of the Dual Empire has been under the strong influence of the Agrarians. It has therefore, been our most important duty to combat it. In November, 1907, and October, 1909, Parliament was obliged to devote numerous sittings to the discussion of our motions with a view to taking measures for the palliation of the high prices of the necessities of life. We did not, it is true, succeed in forcing these measures through against the powerful resistance of the Agrarians; but the debates had a great effect on the masses in the towns and industrial centres, and a really effective campaign against the Agrarians has for the first time become possible. Under the pressure of this agitation Parliament passed in December, 1909, in the teeth of the agrarian opposition, a law enabling the Government to conclude commercial treaties with the Balkan States. Unfortunately the Government has as yet been unable to make use of these powers since in consequence of the dissolution of the Hungarian Parliament the latter's sanction has not been hitherto procurable. Still, the mere fact that the Agrarians could for the first time for many years be defeated in an open battle gives us good hopes for the future.

But our attention was not confined to the relations of Austria with the Balkan States. We had to engage also in other questions of foreign politics. We have repeatedly demanded from the Austrian Government that it should in the interests of the Austrian workers seeking employment in the German Empire protest against the registration system of the Prussian Central Office for field labourers and take measures against the system of arbitrary expulsions practiced by the Prussian Government. We have seized every occasion to raise our protest against the terroristic methods of the Tsar's Government in Russia, Poland, and Finland. Regardless of the attacks of the German and Slavic Chauvinists we advocated the fulfilment of the cultural aspirations of the Italians subjected to the Austrian dominion, — more especially the establishment of an Italian University at Trieste, and we saw the restoration of close and friendly relations with the great Italian nation a guarantee of European peace.

As the Delegations, on account of the political crisis in Hungary, were not called together we took up the fight against the military and naval armaments on the occasion of the discussion on the financial proposals of the Government. The Government bills relating to the issue of new loans gave us the opportunity for raising our protest against the waste of our economic resources on militarism and navalism. We especially fought with all our energy against the construction of Austrian Dreadnoughts. Still the main battle will be fought later on in connexion with the debates on the projected financial scheme of the Government. Thanks to our agitation the bourgeois parties have not dared to accept the indirect taxes proposed by the Government (the increase of the duty on beer and the taxation of soda and mineral waters), and the latter has been obliged to propose an increase in direct taxation (personal income tax, tax on dividends, on directors' fees, on legacies and inheritances) combined with the projected

indirect taxes (duty on spirits and monopoly in matches). The fight against this scheme will form in the near future our main task.

But while engaged in opposing the Government we did not neglect in our legislative Chamber our duties in the matter of social reform. After long and considerable pressure the Government has at last brought in a bill for the amendment of sick insurance (its extension to agricultural labourers, home workers, and domestic servants), and of accident insurance, for the establishment of invalidity and old age insurance for all classes of workers, and of old age insurance for all persons working on their own account (small independent producers, distributors, etc.) whose income does not exceed 2,400 Kronen (100 Livre Sterling) per annum. To each old age and invalidity pension a State grant is to be added amounting to 90 Kronen (3 Livre Sterling 15 shillings) per annum. The fight over the separate provisions of this bill is being carried on in the committee for social insurance which in response to our demand has been declared permanent. Unfortunately the progress is very slow. The Government considers every delay as a gain to the Exchequer, while the bourgeois parties are more concerned with cutting down the self-government rights of the insured than with accelerating the realisation of the reform. In these circumstances the successful issue of the work is yet a matter of distant future.

By means of spontaneous motions we have succeeded in raising discussion on a number of important questions relating to labour protection legislation. The most important of these motions were on the question of the legal limitation of the hours of labour. We demanded the gradual reduction of the maximum working day for all workers engaged in industry and trade from 11 to 8 hours and the immediate introduction of an eight hours' day in the mines and concerns which work continuously. We have, moreover, introduced special legislation for the protection of persons engaged in bakeries, flour mills, on the railways, mineral oil works, salt works, public houses, and forests. Naturally all these motions met with the resistance on the part of the bourgeois parties. Nevertheless we hope to be able to get at least some partial reforms introduced. We cannot give here a detailed description of our work in the domain of social reform, and we confine ourselves to referring to the reports which are being published by the Vienna "Volksbuchhandlung" under the title "Die Tätigkeit des Sozialdemokratischen Verbandes im Abgeordnetenhaus" ("The activity of the Social-Democratic Union in the Lower House of the Austrian Reichsrath": NB. Up till now two numbers have appeared, dealing with the 18th parliamentary session, from June, 17, 1907, to February 5, 1909, and with the 19th session from March 10, to July 11, 1909. A third number dealing with our activity in the present year is in the course of preparation).

The national feuds are the greatest obstacles to all social work in Austria. They supply the representatives of capitalist interests with an ever fresh pretext for hindering all reforms. It was therefore our chief task to maintain amidst a world of craziest chauvinism the integrity of our Union and the homogeneity of its work. In this we so far have completely succeeded. At a time of most embittered national feuds the representatives of the proletariat of all nationalities



have kept faithfully together. Our work is rendered difficult by external and internal complications, but the experience, which we have gained in the course of our common work, permits us to hope that the international solidarity of the proletarians of all nationalities will each time show itself again and again stronger than all the allurements of Nationalism. In Austria, where the class struggles are cut across and are complicated and obscured by the national antagonisms, the international solidarity of the working class cannot be a mere high-sounding phrase for festival occasions — it must operate as a living and active force in the humdrum every-day work.

Vienna, May 1, 1910.

**The Parliamentary Committee of the "Sozialdemokratischer Verband":**

Adler, Daszynski, Diamand, Němec, Pernerstorfer, Pittoni, Resel, Seitz, Seliger, Soukup, Tomášek, Wityk.

**IV A**

**Report of the German Social-Democratic Labour Party in Austria**

**to the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, 1910.**

The valiant struggles for the attainment of equal suffrage for the Reichsrat and the great and significant victories in the first electoral campaign formed the subject of our report to the Stuttgart Congress. The period for which we have to report now has not been marked by events of such import to the Austrian proletariat. The passionate excitements of the great struggles were followed by a period of, comparatively speaking, quiet party work.

After the first electoral campaign had been fought with the result that 87 Social-Democrats found their way into Parliament, it seemed to us that what we wanted was the quiet humdrum work necessary for the consolidation of our gains. We took special pains in the matter of building up the organisation of our party. Of course, circumstances did not allow us to do this internal work undisturbed. Especially in the first half of the period under review our attention was distracted by numerous further fights. Above all we had to "round off" the success which we had achieved in the campaign for equal suffrage to the Reichsrat by making the provincial Diets, which were still dominated by the privileged classes, the object of our next attack.

Already in the summer 1907 the campaign for the Diet franchise in Lower Austria was in full swing. The working class there carried on their agitation with such an impetus that the Christian Socials (Anti-Semites) which bossed the Diet did not dare to declare themselves openly against equal suffrage. At first they tried the methods of procrastination, and as these did not succeed, they made an attempt to conceal their opposition to Reform by means of a reactionary measure disguised under a quasi-democratic cloak. But this fraudulent move also failed thanks to the watchfulness and militant attitude of the workers. The Christian Socials were ultimately obliged to make some improvement in the existing franchise which secured a certain, if not very great, modicum of representation to the working class.



In Bohemia the agitation for the franchise was renewed in September 1907 with redoubled energy. Here, where the national feuds are simply devastating the land, a democratic reform of the franchise is of special importance, as only Democracy would be able to stem the currents of nationalist chauvinism and prepare the way for an honest national arrangement. Our German and Czech comrades fought hand in hand against the provocative privileges of the bourgeoisie and feudal aristocracy. Meeting followed upon meeting, and impressive demonstrations bore witness before the public that the workers were prepared for a very serious battle. On October 9, 1908, the Government under the pressure of our agitation introduced at last in the Bohemian Diet an electoral reform bill. The scheme proposed could by no means have satisfied the demands of the workers, since it did not abolish the system of curiae (electoral colleges for each grade of taxpayers) and only added to those which had hitherto existed a new and special curia for the propertyless class. But even this timid attempt appeared rather formidable to the German bourgeois parties, and they succeeded in blocking its discussion. None the less such frivolous tactics will not help them much in the long run. Their privileges will sooner or later fall under the blows of the proletariat, because they must fall.

With the same zeal and enthusiasm as in Lower Austria and Bohemia, these two main strongholds of our organisation, the campaign for the reform of the Diet was carried on in the other Austrian provinces. In Silesia the bourgeois parties were obliged to acknowledge the need for a franchise reform, but thought they might use the occasion for effecting a profitable transaction to themselves. In October 1908 an electoral reform committee of the Diet brought forward a scheme which instead of doing at last justice to those who hitherto had been deprived of the vote, proposed to increase the power of those who already possessed it. The indignation aroused by this impertinent scheme was, however, so great that it had to be withdrawn. There is reason to hope that a new and better scheme will not be slow in forthcoming.

More successful than in Bohemia and Silesia was the agitation on the subject of the Diet franchise in Styria, Upper Austria, Salzburg and Vorarlberg. It is true that nowhere has a perfectly equal franchise been obtained, but though the effected reforms were small, they nevertheless secured to the working class some representation.

As against these parts of the Empire the franchise in Moravia and Carinthia remained unaltered in spite of all our efforts. There a small reform had been carried out but a few years ago. In Bukovina also the franchise campaign has borne but a modest fruit.

No sooner did the waves of the campaign for the Diet franchise, followed by some partial successes, subside than all the nationalities of Austria were stirred by a great international event. In October 1908 took place the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. The first results of this measure was the boycott of Austrian goods in Turkey. This was soon followed by another complication: Serbia and Montenegro refused to recognise

the annexation. Both sides began to arm in feverish haste, and the outbreak of war seemed imminent. At this moment, when all the furies of patriotic madness were let loose, our party turned with the utmost determination against the Jingoism. Our main opposition to the war preparations and war fever was carried on in Parliament, and we refer for an account of it to our parliamentary report.

Ultimately peace was preserved, but the perverted foreign policy of the Austrian Government imposed upon the peoples new financial burdens. The war preparations swallowed many millions, and yet more millions were spent on the accelerated extension of the armed forces. The burden of taxation became intolerable. To this was added the rapid increase of prices of the necessities of life. We fought with great energy against the two evils of increased taxation and increased cost of living.

At the congress of the party at Reichenberg on September 19 to 24, 1909, we were at last able to carry out a thorough **change in the form of our organisation**, which was needed long ago. Up till now our party organisation was rather loose. The members of the party were locally but seldom organised in permanent and exclusive branches, being content for the most part with meeting in open organisations. This loose form of organisation was certainly an obstacle in the discharge of the manifold work of agitation and propaganda which was needed for the advancement of the party, and so we had been at pains for some years past to give our party a stricter form of organisation. A number of reforms were in the course of years introduced with a view to encouraging the formation of Social-Democratic branches. This work has now been completed at the Reichenberg Congress which decided that the branch should form the sole basis of the party organisation. The Congress was convinced that this stricter form of our organisation would render it more effective, and in this it was not mistaken. So far as we are able to survey the growth of our organisation since the Reichenberg Congress, the results of that decision have been very satisfactory inasmuch as before the Reichenberg Congress the number of comrades of both sexes who belonged to the groups (for the most part loose) was to 112,538 whereas at present the membership of our party branches number 126,000. As in the last general election of 1907 the number of votes polled by the Social-Democratic candidates in the German constituencies of Austria amounted to 511,590, the field of operation for our local organisations is yet pretty wide. Nevertheless the progress recently made is unmistakable and consists not merely in the additional number of members gained, but also in the intensification of party life and in the increase of efficiency produced by the new form of organisation.

**Elections.** In the period under review the following elections to the Reichsrat took place:

On July 8, 1908, we had to fight a by-election in the 7th Silesian country division of Jauernig-Freiwaldau. The number of votes polled by our candidate increased from 3,395 in 1907 to 3,464. The bourgeois parties which in the former year fought united against



us had this time several candidates, in consequence of which our candidate came in for a second ballot. We won by 4,502 against 4,238 votes of our opponent.

A second Reichsrat seat was won by us at Innsbruck. Our vote increased from 1,355 to 1,731. At the second ballot our vote increased further to 2,416, while the bourgeois candidate only succeeded in obtaining 1,966 votes.

The other by-elections in German constituencies resulted in no change. Among the non-German constituencies we unfortunately lost one, Triest.

**Elections to the Diets.** These occurred in the following Austrian provinces:

In October 1908 the first elections took place in Lower Austria on the basis of the new franchise. For Vienna the suffrage is universal and equal, though circumscribed in the interests of the ruling party by a three years' residentia, qualification, by an unequal distribution of seats, and by a system of voting for lists. For the province of Lower Austria itself the new franchise provides, in addition, for a system of curiae. In Vienna we obtained 107,986 votes and returned five candidates. In the provincial constituencies we obtained 27,178 votes and gained a sixth seat.

On March 25, 1909, began the elections to the Carinthian Diet. In this portion of the Empire the curia system prevails and we stand a small chance. In the curia of universal suffrage we polled 10,509 votes. This was a gain, as compared with the Diet elections of 1902, of 4,063 votes, or 65 per cent. At the second ballot we succeeded in gaining one seat — the first in Carinthia.

The franchise in Salzburg provides for a working class curia with two seats. We gained both seats. Altogether we polled at the Diet elections in Salzburg 7,744 votes.

The franchise for the Upper Austrian Diet represents a mixture of reactionary provisions with an ultra-modern finish. Of the 69 seats in the Diet 65 are in the occupation of the propertied classes. For the remaining four seats the law provides for proportional representation, and the bourgeois parties fight against the party of Labour. We succeeded in obtaining for the Social-Democratic list 11,896 votes and thereby gaining one seat.

In Styria the franchise law provides for one curia in which the workmen predominate. Of the eight German constituencies of this curia we captured in the first round four and at the second ballots a fifth. Our total poll was 35,478.

The little country of Vorarlberg also had in the period under review an election to the Diet. We polled altogether 1,733, but were not able to gain any seats.

At the present moment there are in Austria 16 German and 15 non-German Social-Democratic members in the various Diets. The non-German members are 10 at Triest and 5 in Moravia. The German

Social-Democratic members of the Diets count as follows: Lower Austria — 6, Styria — 5, Salzburg — 2, Moravia — 1, Upper Austria — 1, and Carinthia — 1.

The German Social-Democrats of Austria have succeeded of late in returning a good number to the municipal councils. Even the arch-reactionary system of election by curiae proved powerless to prevent this. At the first conference of Social-Democratic members of the municipalities which took place at Reichenberg on September 25, 1909, it was reported that there were at the time in Austria 1,275 Social-Democratic German-speaking members on the various municipalities. Since then we have gained a number of seats on the municipal councils in Bukowina and Vorarlberg. Of the 1,275 members of the municipalities 30 belong to the first, 98 to the second, 1,017 to the third, and 130 to the fourth electoral class. In 17 communes — all very small — Social-Democrats fill posts of mayors.

**The activity of the Social-Democrats in the municipal councils.** The majority of the 379 communes, in which German Social-Democrats have been elected to the municipal council, are small places. This could not but have a certain influence on the activity of our municipal representatives inasmuch as the bare introduction of an ordered system of management required a good deal of work and trouble. Often it was the appearance of Social-Democratic representatives on the councils which rendered a proper system of book-keeping and accounting as well as the suitable organisation of public works at all possible. At the same time it was natural that the Social-Democratic councillors should everywhere pay special attention to the interest of the working class. We thus find in the reports of all our communal representatives, both in small and large places, demands for the improvement of the conditions of labour, for a proper water supply, lighting, drainage, street improvements, regulation of the housing conditions etc. Particularly the education question occupies a large place in the labours of our municipal representatives. There is not a single commune in Austria having on its municipal council a Social-Democrat, where a demand has not been presented by the latter for an improved system of popular schools. Our comrades were often obliged to engage in fights against clerical usurpations and illegal appropriations of taxpayers' money on church objects. On other occasions they had to oppose the use of public money for nationalist and other party purposes.

The Social-Democrats on the municipalities have been devoting themselves not only to the immediate communal tasks, but also, within the limits of their communal activity, to the general interests of the proletariat. Thus they brought in motions in their councils demanding the support of our agitation on behalf of oldage and invalidity insurance, declarations in favour of our campaign for suffrage reform, and a protest against the anti-democratic taxation schemes of the government, and also insisted that the communes should declare themselves in favour of the abolition of all taxes on food and of the opening of the frontiers to the free imports of the necessaries of life.



### **The activity of the Social-Democrats in the Diets.**

The Austrian provincial administrations are completely domineered by the Agrarians. The cowardice of the bourgeois parties has handed over the town population to the tender mercies of the agrarian domination. The few Social-Democratic members of the Diets try whenever they can to oppose it.

The Social-Democrats demanded a democratic reform of the Diet franchise in order to secure the representation of the entire people. In connexion with this they have also demanded the democratisation of the communal franchise. Of the other measures proposed by our groups in the Diets the following deserve separate notice: measures for the improvement of the school system, a reform of the poor law administration, the erection of lunatic asylums, provincial hospitals and orphanages, the regulation of medical and sanitary services, an amendment of the utterly reactionary laws concerning domestic servants etc. In the debates on land development our comrades advocated the improvement of the means of communication, of main roads and station buildings, a reform of the shooting laws in the interests of the peasantry, the encouragement of intensive land culture, and so forth. In addition to this Social-Democrats were obliged to carry on an energetic campaign in all the Diets against the projected increase of indirect taxation.

**The Social-Democratic Press.** The expansion of the Social-Democratic movement in Austria is reflected in the gradual progress of its press. Things are still moving too slowly for our wishes, but they have in the last few years become much better than they were before. The German Social-Democracy in Austria has at the present moment twenty-six political party papers. Of these two are published daily, four three times, nine twice, and eleven once a week.

In addition to the political organs, the interests of the class-conscious proletariat of German Austria are served by the following: the "Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung", the organ for the Social-Democratic women; "Der jugendliche Arbeiter", a paper intended for the proletarian youth; "Der Kampf", a scientific review; the "Bildungsarbeit", devoted to the interests of working class education; "Der Abstinenz", a periodical for temperance propaganda; the "Glühlichter", a comic paper, and several sport papers. The Trade Unions possess some fifty papers.

**The Trade Union movement.** Between 1900 and 1907 the progress of the Austrian Trade Union movement was continuous. The crisis which afterwards set in brought in 1908 the movement to a standstill. In that year the total membership of the Austrian Trade Unions was 482,279. Of this number 447,227 belonged, at the end of 1908, to the international committee of the Trade Unions of the Empire at Vienna, and 35,052 to the Czech-Slavic committee of Trade Unions at Prague. At the end of 1909 the internationally centralised Trade Unions included 415,256 members. The total funds of these Trade Unions amounted at the end of 1909 to 9,373,011 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 390,580). In addition to this the Trade Unions had

at their disposal for strike and lock-out pay as well as victimisation benefits a sum of 2,600,000 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 108,334).

The Trade Union organisation as a whole has 50 German, 44 Czech, 8 Polish, 1 Slovak, 1 Ruthenian, and 3 Italian papers. The circulation per month of these papers is: German 318,700, Czech 118,300, Polish 21,350, Italian 6,200, Slovak 3,800, and Ruthenian 1,800.

The relations between the Party and the Trade Unions are in German Austria, as ever, the best imaginable. Even the deplorable conflict between a portion of the Czech comrades and the international centralised Trade Unions has produced no change in this respect. We are convinced as ever before that Trade Union action can only be carried on with success in each country by centralised international organisations, not by nationally separated bodies. Both the Party and the Trade Unions are inspired with the same strong endeavour to further the interests of the proletariat, and in face of this common aspiration all petty point of friction ought to disappear. We all stand faithfully together because we know that this is the way best to serve the interests of the Austrian working class.

**The co-operative movement.** Though the Trade Union movement has within the last couple of years made no progress owing to the economic crisis, the co-operative movement has made some advance even in the course of this period. At the end of 1908 the Central Union of Austrian co-operative societies consisted of 483 organisations with a total of 206,620 members. In the course of 1909 the number of societies affiliated to the Union increased to 485, and the membership grew to 250,161. Of these societies 335 are German, 92 Czech, 17 Italian, 10 Slovenian, and 1 Rumanian.

The trading done during 1908 by the societies affiliated to the Central Union amounted 59,606,408 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 2,483,600), and in 1909 to 62,509,161 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 2,604,548). The trading done by the organisations affiliated to the Wholesale Purchases Society of the Austrian co-operative stores amounted in 1906 to but a little more than 7½ million Kronen (= Livre Sterling 312,500). Three years later, however, in 1909, it became double, amounting to 16,056,824 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 669,034). The co-operative stores engage to an extent also in production, but that so far is not extensive.

Along with the co-operative distributive stores there also productive co-operative societies as well as building societies and co-operative public houses. Among the productive co-operative concerns special mention deserve the bakeries which in many towns have already attained great importance. The largest working mens' bakery and rye flour mill are in Vienna. The bakery (called the "Hammerbrotwerk" — the Hammer Bread Works) has a productive capacity of 45,000 loaves per diem. The mill produces daily twelve truckfuls of rye.

Should the co-operative movement grow in the future as it has done in the past it will at no distant date become a powerful factor in determining the market price of many goods.

**Women's organisation.** The progress of the movement of proletarian women has during the last few years been rapid beyond



all expectation, — and that notwithstanding the legal difficulties which exist in this respect. For the law forbids women to belong to political organisations. Up to 1907 the Austrian working women were only organised in trade unions. Since then systematic work has been going on with a view to organising them also politically. By the end of 1909 the free political organisation of women numbered 6,412 members. Within the last months that number increased to 14,000.

The organ of the Austrian working women, the "Arbeiterinnen-Zeitung", has of late years considerably increased its circulation. It is published fortnightly and is sold in more than 20,000 copies.

The Austrian **movement of proletarian youth** is, next to the Belgian, the oldest of its kind, dating back to 1893. Its progress during the last three years has been considerable. The "Union of Young Workers" has at present branches in 170 localities of German Austria, — above all in industrial Bohemia. We are of the opinion that young people should be given as much independence as possible, for which reason we possess a special organisation for the youth, where the officials are almost exclusively young workers. With a view to enabling them to maintain their own central offices a certain number of young workers have been installed in various institutions of the party so that they may have time for agitation and the work of organisation. The Executive of the party, the committee of Trade Unions, and the executives of the latter all pay a subvention to the executive of the Young, and their local branches receive support from the local organisations of the party and Trade Unions. Both the rules of the party and a resolution of the Trade Union Congress of 1907 make it the duty of all members of the party to encourage and support the organisation of the youth. The Union of Young Workers, which has for its organ the monthly illustrated paper "Der jugendliche Arbeiter", carries on its work with great energy. Wherever the party and the trade unions possess premises of their own, they place them at the disposal of the young people. The party organisations also supply them with most of the lecturers, and they obtain ample intellectual food from the scientific papers and lectures thus read to them. But the young people are also engaged in practical work. Thus they agitate for a reform of technical education and of the legislation concerning apprentices. This agitation has already borne some fruit, and is always supported by the Social-Democrats in the various Parliaments. No special anti-militarist propaganda is carried on. As the young people possess their own organisations, which are managed by themselves, they become instructed at an early date in the work of organisation. The organisation of the youth which has now a membership of some 8,000 has already supplied the party and the trade unions with some excellent workers. Notwithstanding all the attacks to which it is subjected it is growing by leaps and bounds. It is indeed the joy and the hope of the party.

**The educational work.** It has been noticed in Austria, as in other countries, that the socialist movement, while growing in extent, does not grow in the same degree in depth. There was little time during the period of the struggle for the franchise to do edu-

national work. No sooner, however, were the first elections over than the party, in conjunction with the Trade Unions, drew up a certain scheme for educational work, and a special education committee was formed at Vienna which commenced its activity on November 1, 1908, and extended, on October 1, 1909, its activity to the whole of German Austria. The Committee provides single lectures and whole courses of lectures and instruction in various subjects for all political and trade union organisations and is in close touch — especially at Vienna — with the most important educational societies established by middle class educationalists, which have earned a high reputation in the field of popular instruction. It also provides as far as possible lectures outside Vienna, but chiefly acts for the provinces as an information bureau and agency. For this purpose it has been publishing since September 1909 an organ of its own under the title "Bildungsarbeit" which contains syllabi for lectures, model reading courses, etc. By this means we have succeeded in creating almost in every part of the country a very great educational activity. The chief educational institution in Vienna is the Workers' School where the following subjects are taught two evenings a week during two years: political economy, history of Socialism, general public law, and Labour law. The executive of the party has also decided, with a view to affording the representatives of the provincial workers a chance for systematic study, to institute monthly courses with six hours' instruction per day. The first such course will begin next summer.

The fact that we have in spite of the economic crisis which has considerably paralyzed the activity of the proletariat, still succeeded in carrying out a most intense piece of educational work which will entail on the organisation considerable financial sacrifices — this fact is a very striking proof of the internal strength of our movement.

\* \* \*

Austria is a State inhabited by eight nations. None amongst them possesses that numerical majority which would have enabled it to dominate the others. And as no nation can alone become the predominant in the State, though each of them wants to predominate, the result is that they devour each other in a sort of wild feud. The position of Social-Democracy in the midst of this internecine strife of nationalities is exceedingly difficult. It must try to find a formula which would enable the nationalities to live peacefully together in the common State, and to show that the modern working class movement is in a position to keep its camp free from national strife.

The Austrian Social-Democracy proclaims the principle of national autonomy. It demands the national self-government in the State. In a like manner it has attempted to carry out the principle of national autonomy within the party itself. The general organisation of the Austrian Social-Democracy includes the organisations of German, Czech, Polish, Italian, Slovenian, and Ruthenian Social-Democracies of Austria. Each national group enjoys within the party every possibility of free development, while as against the outside



world it forms a united whole. A common programme forms the basis of our action, and every member of the general party is inspired by the same will. This form of organisation has so far maintained itself in the political movement with complete success.

The peculiar national and political conditions of Austria have placed before the working class of this Empire still greater difficulties than is the case with the proletarians of other countries. None the less the Austrian working class movement advances towards its goal with unerring step. We feel we may entertain the hope on the strength of our experience in the past that our proletariat will ultimately succeed in overcoming both the general and the specially Austrian difficulties.

Vienna, May 1, 1910.

Ferdinand Skaret

Secretaries.

Dr. Victor Adler



# Report of the Commission of Trade Unions of the Austrian Empire

to the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, 1910.

The general depression of the world's and the home markets, which made itself especially felt during the period under review, has not been without its influence on the inner strength of the Trade Unions of Austria. The impetus of the crisis manifested itself in the great number of their members who were left without employment, and necessitated an extraordinary expenditure for, at least, a partial alleviation of the distress caused by our blessed capitalist order of things. Another consequence of the crisis was that within the last three years something like 40,000 members have left the organisations. On the other hand, the masters' associations, which have strongly developed in the course of the last five years, have grown to be a factor with which the Trade Unions will have to fight out in the future some strenuous fights. What is called the "social consciousness" has assumed with our employers the form of professional mischief-making and provocation which finds expression, just as elsewhere, in the systematic application of the lock-out. None the less the centralised Trade Unions have withstood the combined stress of an acute crisis and the onslaught of the exploiters, and stand fully armed against their opponents, the political, economic, and national disadvantages notwithstanding.

**The Position of the Trade Unions.** The organisations affiliated to the Empire's international Commission of the Trade Unions had at the end of 1909 a total membership of 415,256 as against 447,227 the year previous. Their total funds at the end of 1909 amounted to 9,373,911 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 390,580). The expenditure on strikes, lock-outs, and victimization pay amounted to 2,248,725 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 93,697). The total turnover of the centralised Unions in 1909 amounts in round figures, to 20,700,000 Kronen (= Livre Sterling 862,500) as against 19,676,000 (= Livre Sterling 819,833) in 1908.

## The Monthly Circulation of Trade Union Papers.

German papers	318,700	equal to	67.89	per cent. of the total
Czech	118,380	" "	25.21	" " " " "
Polish	21,350	" "	4.56	" " " " "
Italian	6,200	" "	1.33	" " " " "
Slovenian	3,800	" "	0.80	" " " " "
Ruthenian	1,000	" "	0.21	" " " " "

Total 469,430 equal to 100.00 per cent.



**The Relations of the Trade Unions to the Party** form, in spite of the strict division of labour and perfect equality of the two organisations, a living bond of the entire socialist movement of the working class in Austria. The centralised Trade Unions regard it as a fundamental principle that precisely in Austria, which is torn by national feuds, the workers in their capacity of wage slaves ought to be educated to Social-Democracy in order to be able in this particular country, with its own definite economic boundaries, to carry on with success its direct class war against the exploiters, with special regard for internationalism and uniformity by means of international and uniform organisations built up for each industry and trade.

**The Difficulties in building up the Centralised Trade Unions.** The expansion of international and uniform Trade Unions throughout the Empire has met of late with some difficulties created, among other agencies, by the Party itself. The grouping of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria on the basis of nationalities — a grouping which is a necessity to the Party — has induced a number of national enthusiasts within the Party to try the same sort of grouping in the Trade Unions in order thus to give a suitable support and completion to the political party organisation.

**Complaint against the Party Executive of the Czech Social-Democracy in Austria.** Since the grouping of the political party organisation of the Austrian Social-Democracy according to nationalities — a grouping which, in point of fact, has existed since 1894 and was formally constituted in 1897 on the resolution of an international party congress — the attempts to stem the growth of centralised Trade Unions have really never ceased. At first the attempts were rather timid and assumed a definite shape in 1897 when a Czech-Slavic Trade Union Committee — a sort of national administrative council — was established with its headquarters at Prague. The formation of this Czech-Slavic Trade Union Committee was alleged to be due to the fact that the general Trade Union Congress of the previous year at Vienna had rejected the demand of the Czech party for a national separation of the Secretariat of the Empire's Commission of the Trade Unions of Austria. As a matter of fact, the Trade Union congress did reject this demand of the Czech executive, but on the ground that the Secretariat of the Commission of the Trade Unions had been in the habit of discharging all the same the work, which had to be done in the Czech language, through a representative appointed by the Czech party executive itself and co-opted on the Commission. Nevertheless the rejection of the demand of the Czech party executive did not yet hinder at that time the work of expansion of the centralised Trade Unions — especially as the latter did all in their power and so far as the means permitted to meet the linguistic and national requirements of the workers. This enabled them without much difficulty to get hold of and to rope in as members not only German, but also non-German-speaking workers. Journals, pamphlets, rules and regulations — all were printed in the several languages required. In the same complete agreement with the various language groups were also selected and appointed the various

editors, secretaries, and other officials, and local branches were formed with a view to the requirements of the various language-speaking workers, which were then supplied with suitable lecturers and librarians. Still it was impossible to meet in every centralised Trade Union the linguistic requirements at once. It must be frankly admitted that in a number of cases the non-German speaking "persons of trust" (officials etc.) had had to fight a good deal before they obtained full recognition. At the same time, however, every impartial witness will admit that a good many of the centralised Trade Unions were at that time simply unable, from a financial point of view, to meet all the linguistic requirements, since both their total membership and their particular national group were very small. One must not forget in this connexion that a Trade Union organisation in Austria is in the matter of leadership, agitation, education, and administration a considerably more costly affair than in the countries with but one or two nationalities. There was in the considerations of the demand of the Czech comrades yet another circumstance which weighed a good deal and prevented its immediate acceptance. This was the recognition that the claims as regards language were being used for the purpose of national separation so as to prepare the division of the Trade Unions according to nationality. Already at the International conference of the Secretaries of Trade Union Federations in Amsterdam in 1905 the representative of the Czech-Slavic Trade Union Committee at Prague demanded, without even previously consulting the general (Empire's) Commission of the Trade Unions of Austria, that the Czech-Slavic Committee should be recognised as the second central organisation of the separate national organisations of Austria. The conference rejected this unjustified demand which was calculated to jeopardise the unity of the Trade Union movement, and even refused to enter the reasoned statement of motives, which had been submitted in writing, in the minutes of the proceedings. We shall, however, give here partly in a summarised form and partly textually this statement which will show on what grounds the claim was based:

"The Czech people, consisting preponderatingly of proletarians, numbers more than six millions, and inhabits large industrial districts, forming, in addition, considerable minorities in districts with mixed languages.

Its political, social-democratic, organisation belongs to the oldest social-democratic organisations of the world and its right to an independent representation both as a party and as a national organisation has never been denied either by an Empire's or by an international congress. For the Czech language is not and has never been in the least related to the German language nor to any other. It is, therefore, impossible to carry on the work of organisation and agitation in the German tongue among the Czech-Slavic workers or to discharge those still higher duties which the historical development places upon the proletariat.

The growth of our Trade Union movement depends upon the work and the co-operation of the political organisations, and we



will not permit that our Trade Union organisations should be dominated by the spirit or administered by members of any other nationality.

By claiming an independent representation we merely protect one of the fundamental principles of Social-Democracy, namely, the people's right of self-government. Seeing that the individuality of the Czech workers, just as that of all other class-conscious workers, will not tolerate for any length of time the domination of members of another nationality, we are anxious to remove everything that can have a detrimental effect on the whole Trade Union movement and on the solidarity and necessary co-operation of all workers of Austria. The work of agitation among the Czech-Slavic workers can only proceed in the Czech tongue, and just as the State has not succeeded by means of rigid centralisation in binding the peoples to the Empire, so will our German comrades in Vienna not succeed in this task, even if we should quite voluntarily abjure our rights in favour of the rigid and unjustified centralisation which they advocate.

The Czech-Slavic Trade Union committee was formed in 1896 after the great political prosecutions of the Socialists, and has now succeeded in rallying round its banner more than 21,000 workers.

This growth is due also to the extraordinary energy of the proletariat struggling for its emancipation in the conviction that it is fighting for its own organisation and its own natural rights. The Czech Social-Democratic workers are striving to attain in the ranks of Social-Democracy at least that position which is due to them as an independent nationality and an active agency in the international organised proletariat.

We are fully conscious of our cultural, social, and political duties, and we would hardly tolerate that the same rights should not be recognised in our case as are recognised in the case of smaller and, from an industrial point of view, less developed nationalities, who, perhaps, have only preserved their national independence and national legislation thanks to some timely marriage of their King or to the sword of their warriors.

The Austrian Monarchy is condemned to inevitable death, and that only because it does not permit its nationalities to enjoy the freedom and rights which are necessary for their development. The Social-Democratic Party will, too, commit a fatal mistake if it will not discover such means and ways as will guarantee the independence, the untrammelled development, and the progress of its organisations."

The rejection of the demand for recognition of the Czech-Slavic Trade Union committee in Prague as the second Trade Union centre of the Empire has induced the Czech comrades of the party and the Czech Trade Union separatists to commence a violent campaign among the Czech workers and organisations against, chiefly, the Secretary of the general (Empire's) Commission of the Trade Unions

of Austria whose attitude in the matter was so interpreted as if he in advocating the rejection at Amsterdam, had for his aim the exclusion of the Czech workers from the Trade Union International, and wanted to offend them. The true fact, however, was suppressed that the rejection of the Czech demand had been dictated by purely Trade Union considerations, and the decision of the Trade Union International was made use of by these particular Czech comrades as would-be arguments in their agitation among the Czech workers for the national breaking of the centralised Trade Unions. Unfortunately they have, at least, in part succeeded in their efforts and that notwithstanding the fact that a special Trade Union Congress in 1905 confirmed the Amsterdam decision and condemned the formation of national separate organisations. The situation thus became more and more acute every day.

The Czech Social-Democracy had hitherto abstained from official interference in this pre-eminently Trade Union conflict, although unofficially their leaders were very busy in encouraging these trade-union-splitting aspirations. At the beginning of 1910, however, something happened which gave the Czech party the opportunity to come forward also officially in support of the Separatists.

Some Czech Centralists at Brünn permitted themselves as Social-Democrats to work as heretofore in the Czech party organisation and to exercise as before a certain influence. This influence was now denied to them on the pretext that they were Centralists and, therefore, not "reliable" Czechs, but "paid men from Vienna" (i. e. in the pay of the "Germans") who in return for their salary were working for the centralisation of the Trade Unions. This meant that our men at Brünn were doing something which offended the national dignity of the Czech Separatists and were on that account to be regarded as traitors to the Czech nation. Naturally our Czech Trade Unionists would not permit such "comradely" treatment. A conference of the Czech Trade Union organisations of Moravia was called together at Brünn to give a reply to the official resolution which had in the meantime been passed by the Czech Social-Democracy (see this resolution below). As a result this conference passed a counter-resolution and established a central Trade Union paper in the Czech tongue. But the Czech executive was not idle. It also summoned for the same date a Trade Union conference at which a Czech-Slavic Trade Union committee was formed for Moravia in order to carry the split also into that country. By this action the executive of the Czech Social-Democracy has also effected in a "satisfactory" manner a split in the party itself, similar to that which had hitherto existed only in the Trade Union movement. The Centralists and Separatist now stand opposed to each other not only in the Trade Unions, but also in the Party — a thing which could have been foreseen by anybody who was but slightly familiar with the elements of our party tendencies, but which for a long time was obscure for our Czech party leaders. Both sides are now advocating their views and principles in the press and at meetings. If one follows these "business-like" discussions one cannot fail to observe tendencies which are for us, Social-Democrats, highly undesirable. The Separatists pro-



claim the national independence of the Party and the Trade Unions, and proceed in their fanaticism so far as to raise among the different masses the watchword demanding the concentration of the entire Czech people without distinction of classes.

It is obvious that the policy of the Separatists is bound to cause the utmost damage to the prosecution of the class war, but especially of the Trade Union warfare. If national separation of the Trade Union organisations is to be effected in every industrial centre, in every trade, in every factory and workshop, then, of course, a weakening of the material resources, necessary for militant action, is bound to ensue through their having been split up, as well as a diminution of the state of preparedness and of the unity of action and decision. It must be clear to everybody who is familiar with the nature and history of the Trade Union movement, that two organisations will be slower, more costly, and less efficient both in defence and offence than one. But the Czech party is justifying the separatist movement, the splitting up of the Trade Unions, not by the interests of the Trade Union organisation, but by those of the Czech political organisation. To this it may be replied that the national autonomy of the political organisations is and has been a political necessity; but that this political autonomy must also include a national separation of the Trade Unions is a profound mistake and constitutes a danger not only for the Trade Unions, but also in its ultimate course for the Party, since it will engender a false notion of the opposing interests of the Trade Unions and the Party and thus prepare the way for syndicalist tendencies, whose errors we have hitherto been spared.

The Czech separatist Trade Union organisation has a membership of about 45,000, but over 100,000 Czech workers still belong to the centralised Trade Unions, thus forming together with the German, Polish, Ruthenian, Slovenian and Italian workers a respectable army of 415,000 faithful militants.

We submit this report to the Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, being convinced that the above described action of the Czech Social-Democracy stands in contradiction to the resolution of the Stuttgart International Congress on the relations between the political Socialist parties and the Trade Union organisations. This report should also serve as a warning to those responsible comrades who, perhaps, with perfect good faith in the daily work, but standing in the midst of national cross-currents and confusion, have lost a clear view of the future and are inclined to make a sacrifice for the sake of the practical work of to-day at the expense of the historical and revolutionary mission of the militant proletariat of the world.

## **The Main Resolutions of the two Sections on the Question at Issue.**

### **The Demand of the Prague Committee of Trade Unions in 1905.**

"The Czech Trade Union Committee at Prague makes the following recommendations with a view to allaying the differences between the Trade Union Commission at Vienna and the Trade Union Committee at Prague and the prevention of international commotions and quarrels in the separate organisations; as well as to safeguarding the equal rights of members of all nationalities:

I. a) The recognition and formation of autonomous Trade Union committees with competency extending over all members of their respective nationalities.

b) The recognition of an international General Commission of Trade Unions of Austria, composed of representatives of the national committees, whose competency shall extend over all matters exceeding the limits of the separate national committees. Above all this Commission will have for its duty the maintenance and the development of the relations with the Trade Union organisations outside Austria and the selection of representatives to the working class conferences and congresses abroad.

II. The representatives of the above mentioned organisations, affiliated to the Czech Trade Unions committee recognise under the conditions specified below the following forms of Trade Union organisation:

1. The organisation of national Unions and Federations.
2. The organisation of Associations embracing the whole Empire.
3. The organisation of Federations embracing the whole Empire.
4. The organisation of Unions embracing the Empire of international Trades' Councils.

a) The executives of the Trade Union organisations of the whole Empire shall in their activity and press observe complete national equality, which is the object of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Austria.

The individual nationalities shall enjoy the right of representation on the Executives, the Trade Union Congresses, and the international conferences, in proportion to their numerical strength.

The central executives shall in their annual reports and international publications keep a statistical record of their members according to their respective nationalities.

b) To each nationality shall be guaranteed the right to elect their own agitation and wage committees irrespective of the frontiers mentioned in the legal Rules of Association. The following shall be the functions of these committees: the management of the paper which shall be published in their native language; the election of



editors, secretaries, and of other paid officials; and the settlement of local disputes insofar as they only involve members of their nationality and such firms as have no branches or head-quarters in other portions of the Empire.

c) The executives shall not hinder the formation of national branches, when thirty members in a place or town quarter, where there is no branch of the same nationality and trade union, declare their wish to do so, in which case the local branches and unions belonging to the general Trade Unions, have the right to decide to which Trade Union committee they would like to pay the contributions provided in the rules of these committees."

#### The Reply of the Trade Union Commission of the Empire.

The Trade Union Commission of the Empire, after careful consideration of the proposals of the Prague committee, declares:

"The Trade Union Commission of the Empire is naturally convinced that it is its duty as well as the duty of the centralised organisations to meet in every way linguistical requirements of the members.

It declares further:

1. The resolutions adopted by the Trade Union congresses referring to the carrying out of centralisation of the Trade Union movement must be adhered to.

2. Since the scheme of organisation proposed by the Trade Union committee at Prague aims at the formation of independent national Trade Unions and associations throughout the Empire against centralisation, and its realisations would cause grave damage to the general Trade Union movement, it is duty of the centralised organisations to oppose with all energy these aspirations, inimical as they are to the interests of the working class of all nationalities.

3. In virtue of the rules of our organisation and in view of the needs of the Trade Union struggle for the improvement of the social position of the working class, all such organisations as sever themselves, by means of local, district and general associations, from the centralised organisations must be regarded as standing outside the Trade Unions of Austria and as not entitled to the benefit of mutual arrangements.

4. The aspirations of the Czech Trade Union committee to extend its activity beyond the Czech portion of Bohemia and thus to transform it into a Czech Trade Union Commission of the Empire must be opposed in a most emphatic manner, since such aspirations are not in consonance with the resolutions passed by the general Trade Union congresses, and are calculated to cause harm to the Trade Union movement of all sections of industry and to cripple the success of the trade union struggle.

5. The action of the delegates of the Commission of the Empire at the international conference of Secretaries of Trade Union Federations at Amsterdam against the admission of a delegate from the Czech Trade Union committee was based on the resolutions of the Stuttgart and Dublin conferences and stand in perfect consonance

with them. The Trade Union Commission of the Empire assembled at Brünn approves, therefore, expressly the action of its delegate at Amsterdam, which exactly corresponded to the requirements of the Trade Union policy of the Central Executive."

The extraordinary general Trade Union Congress of 1905 decided on the proposed programme of the Czech Trade Union committee by the following votes:

For the programme . . . . .	2,364 votes
Against the programme . . . . .	197,202 "
Did not vote — delegates	
representing . . . . .	30,686 "
Were absent — delegates	
representing . . . . .	8,640 "

#### The Resolution of the Separatists.

The conference of delegates of the Czech-Slavic Social-Democratic Labour Party assembled at the People's Palace in Prague on May 27 and 28, 1910, resolved in the matter of the dispute about the form of organisation as follows (extract):

"... Relying on the fundamental principles of the International, which proclaim the absolute equality, the self-determination, and the independent power of decision of each and sundry nationality in all matters and under all circumstances, the Czech-Slavic Social-Democratic Labour Party insists on its right, unlimited as it is by anything or anybody, to decide upon all questions of its political, trade union, and co-operative organisations, declaring at the same time that it does not want, in the future any more than in the past, to lose sight of the solidarity, necessary in the common actions of the class war, with the international organised proletariat of the world.

This independence of the Czech organisation in the field of politics has also demanded, as a natural complement, the independence also of the trade union organisation. The Czech Social-Democracy, whose political and trade union movement constitute an essentially independent whole, could not be split into two halves of which one is managed from the Czech centre at Prague, and the other from the German centre at Vienna. Notwithstanding the sameness of programme there are between the Czech and German proletariats such differences of development and, in consequence, such differences of requirements and needs that a corresponding difference in the technique of organisation and administration as well as in the tactics is inevitable. Since it is impossible to unite all these opposed interests in the many-tongued centralised forms of organisation, there are constantly arising internal differences which sow mutual distrust and paralise the preparedness and the militant energy of the whole proletariat ...."

#### The Resolution of the Centralists.

The conference of the Czech Social-Democratic adherents of the centralised Trade Unions, assembled at Brünn on April 3 and 4, 1910, has considered the recent events in Moravia and made the following declaration:



"1. The supreme principle of organisation of the struggle of the Czech proletariat must unconditionally remain that of the class war and Internationalism.

The Conference solemnly declares that it will always and everywhere defend with all energy the proletarian solidarity of the class-conscious, internationally inspired working class.

The awakening and the cultivation of class-consciousness in the workers, the education of the workers to comprehension of their position in the class-state, their strengthening for the struggle, carried on in common with the proletarians of all nations, for the substitution of a socialist in the place of the capitalist society — this we regard as the loftiest as well as the common task of both the Trade Union and political organisations of the proletariat. It is because of this that we have devoted our lives to Socialism, to Internationalism, and to the solidarity of the proletarian class, and now declare once more that we shall adhere with unshaken faith to these principles.

2. In practice, however, a division of labour between the Trade Union and political organisations is absolutely necessary. It is not admissible, if the two directions of proletarian action are to enjoy the full opportunity for efficient and successful work, that either of them should be limited in its sovereignty as regards the decisions on its own actions. It is especially the Trade Union struggle which will not tolerate any outside influence, as it is guided exclusively by the economic requirements of the proletariat, which it serves, and by the conditions prevailing in the masters' camp. A Trade Union organisation which permits itself to be guided in its internal matters by outside considerations, will lose its mobility as well as the capacity and preparedness for fight. Just as the strength of the employers arises out of the possession of the means of production, out of their anarchical use, out of the protection afforded them by the State and Government, and, last but not least, out of their powerful international organisations where political opponents — nay, people divided by nationality and religion, deliberate upon common action — just so the strength of the proletariat flows from its class-consciousness and the unity of its organisations. We oppose to the concentration of capital the concentration of our strength, to the concentration of exploiters the concentration of exploited, to the concentration of exploiters' brutality the concentration of the proletarian spirit of self-sacrifice and enthusiasm.

It is only possible through an international and united organisation to win those two millions workers in Austria who, though perfectly ripe for organisation, have not yet been won over. A united Trade Union organisation is a matter of life and death for the struggle for the improvement of the conditions of labour and wages and for the agitation in general in this country, so lacerated by the national feuds of the bourgeoisie.

The separatist Trade Union organisations, whose chief idea is the division of labour according to nationality, endanger the unity of action and the international solidarity, and we, therefore, cannot, from our international and class-war standpoint, sympathise with them. ■

We greet our proletarian brethren of other nations in Austria and tell them that we shall remain in the common fight, in the common movement, and are anxious, together with them, to achieve further successes under the common banner of the united centralised organisations."

### **The Declaration of the Bohemian Conference of the Czech Officials of Trust in Favour of the Unity of the Party.**

The following declaration has been adopted by a majority of all votes against seven, there being present 436 officials of trust, delegated by the political organisations of all Bohemia, and representatives of the chief institutions of the Czech Social-Democracy:

"The Conference of the officials of trust of the Czech-Slavic Social-Democratic Labour Party in Bohemia, assembled on May 15 and 16, 1910, expresses its complete approval to the decision of the Party executive, expressing the desire and the hope that a permanent and close relationship might be established between the Trade Union movement and the political party, which object is to be attained best if the Czech-Slavic Social-Democratic Labour Party were to be supported by its own autonomous Trade Union organisations, as is the case with our parties among all other nations, in all other States and countries.

It is of vital importance to our party that this principle should become the guiding watchword of our entire party and of all members of the party and that what is regarded as highly desirable for the growth and the success of the Czech organised proletariat should be translated into deeds.

The Conference is convinced that the International of the world, to which the Czech Social-Democracy closely adheres, will become stronger in the measure as its national component parts will become stronger, and that likewise the International of Austria will become stronger when the workers of every and all nationalities will lean for support on their own independent and united political and trade union organisations.

May our comrades and organisations work in this direction, may the entire Czech proletariat be inspired by this idea!"

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The above report, together with the explanatory documents, is submitted by us to the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen in the consciousness of our duty towards the interests of the Austrian proletarians of all nationalities.

Vienna, May, 1910.

On behalf of the General (Empire's) Commission of the Trade Unions of Austria:

**A. Hueber,**  
Secretary.